

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

Amendments to Appendices I and II of CITES

Thirteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Bangkok (Thailand), 2 – 14 October 2004

A. PROPOSAL

Deletion of *Agapornis roseicollis* from Appendix II.

B. PROPONENTS

Republic of Namibia and the United States of America.

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1.1 Taxonomy

- 1.1 Class: Aves
- 1.2 Order: Psittaciformes
- 1.3 Family: Psittacidae
- 1.4 Species: *Agapornis roseicollis*, Vieillot 1818.
Subspecies described: *A. r. catumbella*, Hall, 1952
A. r. roseicollis, Vieillot, 1818

- 1.5 Scientific synonyms
None

- 1.6 Common names
English: rosy-faced lovebird, peach-faced lovebird
French: inséparable rosegorge
Spanish: inseparable de Namibia

- 1.7 Code Numbers: A-218.003.003.008

2. Biological Parameters

2.1 Distribution

The peach-faced lovebird (*Agapornis roseicollis*) is found in dry wooded country in southwestern Africa, up to an elevation of 1,500 m (Collar 1997). The range is poorly known, but it is generally found in Angola, southwards along the coast through Namibia to Northern Cape Province, South Africa (Juniper and Parr 1998). It is very dependent on areas near water, and exhibits nomadic tendencies when water is unavailable. Escapes of captive birds occur in urban areas (Collar 1997).

2.2 Habitat availability

The peach-faced lovebird is found in arid woodland, scrubby hillsides and tree-lined watercourses including river canyons, rocky terrain where area rainfall exceeds 100 mm, and where water is accessible (Collar 1997). It is a colonial breeder with natural breeding sites in the inaccessible and often vertical cracks found in steep rock-faces on exfoliating granite or sandstone koppies (Simmons 1997). However, it is highly adaptable and it nests and roosts in sociable weaver (*Philetairus*

socius) nests, as well as artificial structures and junction boxes on telephone poles, and in otherwise inappropriate habitats (Simmons 1997).

2.3 Population status

The current population status of the peach-faced lovebird is not exactly known. However, Simmons (1997) indicated that it is unlikely that any range contraction has occurred during the 20th century, and that it is more likely that populations have increased with the provision of water points in previously dry areas, and artificial structures in which it can nest. Simmons believes the species is widespread and abundant in the wild. Juniper and Parr (1998) noted that there has been a historic decline due to trapping, but they are not globally threatened. Flocks of hundreds of birds can be found at good food sources, but otherwise they occur in small flocks (Collar 1997).

2.4 Population trends

See Population status above.

2.5 Geographic trends

See Distribution and Habitat availability above.

2.6 Role of the species in its ecosystem

The peach-faced lovebird feeds mainly on seeds of *Albizia* (and flowers) and *Acacia*, and buds and foliage of many plants including *Euphorbia*. It also feeds on berries. It is considered a pest in grain fields, particularly where it feeds on maize and sunflowers. Breeding is from February to March. Unusual among birds, this species is able to breed at two months of age. Extended breeding may occur under favorable conditions after rainfall. The species is a colonial nester and may breed alongside sociable weavers and white-browed sparrow weavers (*Plocepasser mahali*) (Forshaw 1977). Although the peach-faced lovebird is a resident, it wanders locally in the winter in search of water (Collar 1997). It shares drinking sites with parrot species such as Ruppell's parrot (*Poicephalus rueppellii*) and Meyer's parrot (*Poicephalus meyeri*) (Simmons 1997).

2.7 Threats

Though the species is not globally threatened, some authors note that the export of thousands of birds in Angola has greatly contributed to a reduction in its populations in the southern part of that country (Collar 1997, Juniper and Parr 1998). Conversely, a review of the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) trade data for 1992 to 2001 did not indicate any exports of the species from Angola. No historic or current wild population census information is available from the range countries. The peach-faced lovebird is not listed in the 2003 *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* (IUCN 2003), ***The Eskom Red Data Book of Birds of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland*** (Barnes 2000), or the IUCN parrot action plan (Snyder et al. 2000).

3. Utilization and Trade

3.1 National utilization

Because Namibia does not allow any wild harvesting of peach-faced lovebirds, there is no national utilization from the wild population.

3.2 Legal international trade

More than 99% of range country exports of *Agapornis roseicollis* from 1992 to 2001 were from South Africa, with an insignificant amount from Namibia (242 exported specimens). No specimens were reported as exported from Angola. Within the same period, the major non-range exporting countries

were Cuba, China, and the Netherlands. Between 1999 and 2001, the exports of specimens from non-range countries more than doubled those from the range countries. This was primarily due to the large numbers (more than 45,000 specimens each year) exported from China, which first reported its exports (2,200 specimens) in 1998 (WCMC 2003; Table 1). Between 1992 and 2001, there were 540,549 reported imports and 574,440 exports of this species (WCMC data). Only 5 of these specimens (2 imports, 3 exports) were reported as wild-caught and 153 were of unknown origin. The largest exporters were South Africa (27.8%) and China (15.47%).

Table 1. Number of specimens of *Agapornis roseicollis* exported between 1992 and 2001.

Year	Specimens Exported from Range Countries	Specimens Exported from Non-range countries
1992	7,062	11,182
1993	21,049	14,457
1994	23,062	14,528
1995	19,376	25,006
1996	12,267	10,726
1997	18,746	29,486
1998	29,459	47,165
1999	25,105	81,315
2000	21,243	86,527
2001	23,054	53,625
Total	200,423	374,017

3.3 Illegal trade

There is no recorded illegal trade in this species.

3.4 Actual or potential trade impacts

Critics of this proposal may be concerned that removal from the Appendices will result in an unsustainable rate of capture of wild specimens by local people. Such an assumption can be made for any proposal to remove a parrot from the Appendices. However, because this species is easily bred in captivity, almost all exports are captive-bred specimens, demand is primarily for unusual color morphs (mutations) resulting from captive breeding, and prices are low for captive-bred specimens, removing this species from the CITES Appendices is unlikely to increase the demand for wild-caught birds. In addition, the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) notes that there is no reason to believe that international trade has any effect on the Namibian wild population, or that the delisting of this species will impact the wild population (3 March 2004 letter to U.S. Division of Scientific Authority from M. Lindeque, Permanent Secretary, MET, Namibia). The collection of this species from the wild for commercial purposes is prohibited in the Namibian and South African parts of its range.

3.5 Captive breeding or artificial propagation for commercial purposes (outside country of origin)

The peach-faced lovebird is widely bred in captivity for commercial purposes. Only 3 of over 500,000 specimens exported from 1992 through 2001 were reported as specimens of wild origin. In captivity, they breed easily. A pair can breed and rear three clutches (4-5 eggs per clutch) in a season (Vriends 1984). There are also 16 or more color mutations of this species produced in captivity, of which 8 are common, 7 are established, and 1 is considered rare (Martin 2002). Most color mutations are bred worldwide.

4. Conservation and Management

4.1 Legal status

4.1.1 National

Since 1993, Namibia has only traded captive-bred specimens of this species. No harvesting of wild specimens is allowed. According to MET, there is no significant demand for harvesting from the wild because of the availability of captive-bred specimens (3 March 2004 letter to U.S. Division of Scientific Authority from M. Lindeque, Permanent Secretary, MET, Namibia).

In Northern Cape Province, the South African province in which the peach-faced lovebird occurs, the capture of wild birds for commercial purposes is prohibited. New biodiversity legislation that will be promulgated in 2004 also restricts activities involving indigenous species (22 April 2004 letter to U.S. Division of Scientific Authority from T. Carroll, Principal Environmental Officer, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, South Africa).

4.1.2 International

Namibia fully supports a proposal to delist the peach-faced lovebird. MET notes that there is no reason to believe that international trade has any effect on the Namibian wild population, or that the delisting of this species will impact the wild population. South Africa, particularly Northern Cape Province, supports this proposal.

Because of its listing in Appendix II of CITES, the import of the peach-faced lovebird is subject to the prohibitions of the Wild Bird Conservation Act in the United States.

4.2 Species management

4.2.1 Population monitoring

Information not available.

4.2.2 Habitat conservation:

In Namibia, the peach-faced lovebird occurs extensively in the Hardap Game Reserve, Namib-Naukluft Park, and the Waterberg Plateau Park, particularly around water sources. It also occurs peripherally in Etosha National Park, extensively in areas which are little impacted by man (Kunene River and eastern parts of the Orange River), and in 16 communal conservancies where rocky outcrops are found. The habitat in these areas is highly protected (Simmons, Associate Researcher, FitzPatrick Institute, University of Cape Town, South Africa, pers. com. 2004).

4.2.3 Management measures:

This species is common in the wild and in captivity. No specific management is required.

4.3 Control measures:

4.3.1 International trade

Wild-caught specimens are prohibited from trade for commercial purposes in Namibia and Northern Cape Province, South Africa.

4.3.2 Domestic measures:

Harvesting of wild specimens is prohibited in Namibia and at the provincial level in South Africa. Northern Cape province, the province in which the peach-faced lovebird occurs, prohibits the capture of wild birds for commercial purposes.

5. Information on Similar Species

The only species within the region that appears similar to the peach-faced lovebird is the black-cheeked lovebird (*Agapornis nigrigenis*), which is occasionally seen in the Caprivi Strip in Namibia (Simmons 1997). However, the yellowish beak coloration and peach face and chest distinguish the peach-faced lovebird from all other *Agapornis* species (Collar 1997). Because there are stark morphological differences between the peach-faced lovebird and other lovebird species, we anticipate there would be no effect on other lovebird species due to misidentification.

6. Other Comments

None.

7. Additional Remarks

None.

8. References

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